

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claim 3 was objected to because of informalities. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Paykin (U.S. Pat. No. 6,322,082). Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosoda (U.S. Pat. No. 6,612,582) in view of Paykin. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosoda in view of Japanese Patent 2003-294154.

Regarding claim 1 (Fig. 1), the rejection should be overcome by inclusion of the feature that the seal has the auxiliary lip 43 in contact with the inner peripheral step portion of the rod guide extending parallel to a longitudinal axis of the shaft. Pressure of the auxiliary lip to the rod guide is increased in consequence of an increase of pressure in the sealed space, and sealing performance is thereby enhanced.

Regarding claim 2 (Figs. 2 and 3), the concave portion is provided at the inner periphery of the washer 41 and the seal having the main lip 42 is thereby fixed. The concave portion of the washer is a radially extending rising surface terminating in a perpendicular extending surface. As the point that the concave portion provided at the washer is not shown in the cited reference, claim 2 is therefore distinguished over this reference.

Regarding claim 3 (Fig. 4), the auxiliary washer 47 is fixed by being bent along the outer periphery of the washer 41 at a cylinder portion and the backup ring 44 is completely separated from the auxiliary washer by the main lip. The structure is different from the cited references in the point that the sealing device is not merely fixed but the backup ring is integrally fixed and separated from the auxiliary washer.

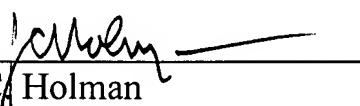
Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application, as they now stand, patentably distinguish over the references cited and applied by the Examiner and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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